

The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters of interest to the laboring in the legislative, judicial and such other information that is of the trade union movement.

REPRODUCTION OF THE WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1049.

WILLIAM GREEN, President

WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, MAY 16, 1931

FRANK MORRISON, Secretary

No man is born without ambitious worldly desires.—Carlyle.

VOL. 21, NO. 10.

MARKET-BASKET COST IS NOT PROSPERITY BASE

Melvin Traylor, president First National Bank, Chicago, favors American living standards, but intimates that wage reductions are permissible when living costs are reduced.

This is a revival of the old theory that workers' wages should be based on market basket costs.

Workers, under this system, must reject all hope of higher living standards. The trader, commission man and huckster, not they, set wages that have no relation to the production of wealth.

The Traylor theory is also based on the belief that American "living standards" were a fact before the stock crash in 1929.

No one denies that low purchasing power will delay a business recovery. But many men refuse to acknowledge that the depression was caused by low purchasing power.

By holding wages even where they were before the stock crash, while automatic machinery and scientific processes have increased, the stage is set for another depression.

Business depressions are logical if the Traylor theory is correct. If we base wages on market basket costs we are in a circle from which there can be no permanent relief.

Labor-displacing machinery and scientific processes increase output and workers are steadily released from employment. Goods continue to be thrown on the market.

Consuming army, while more commodities are manufactured by automatic methods. The inevitable happens, while business men dodge the cause as a necessary continuation of policies that either intensify the depression or make the next one more acute.

Business men should realize the social aspect of wages. This is not merely a "labor" question. Wages diffuse wealth.

The depression cause, followed to its logical end, will engulf business men. They can not continue to prosper under a system of wages based on market basket costs and a production method that is based on automatic machinery and scientific processes.

With millions of idle men, fed by charity, at the other end of the line, an impossible condition is created.

GOVERNMENT'S BASE IS JUSTICE; CHARITY IS FAULTY SUBSTITUTE

Professor of Sociology, St. Francis Seminary, in "Men and Society"

It is particularly important for Statesmen and industrialists to remember that society is a juridical institution, namely, that it rests on the bed of justice, and not on charity. The system of justice is an extremely necessary social force, it is the basis of the society. Unwise policies, based on a mistaken concept of human relations, are some of the worst enemies of legislatures and industrial corporations. To illustrate, the system of justice that fails to search out and remove the economic causes of poverty and contentment is a system that is maintaining elaborate systems of relief, it is proceeding on a false premise.

If some of its citizens are actually in need, investigation should be made as to whether or not their just rights are being denied by their stronger fellow-citizens. It is the primary duty of the state to stamp out such injustices when they are found.

More workers are forced into the idle, non-producing ranks.

That self-satisfied feeling

Mr. E. H. H. Simmons, former president New York Stock Exchange, declares "public hysteria" over business conditions.

The government is overlooking the 600,000 unemployed workers in this country. This means, at the very lowest, 150,000 hungry men, women and children, with millions of others on the brink of poverty.

Such periods of trial may injure faint hearts and shallow beliefs, but they also call forth from the great rank and file of our people those ancient and invaluable human qualities of courage, persistence and faith which in the past have created everything of genuine value in the world.

HOME LIFE INJURED BY INDUSTRIAL SAG

Parkersburg, W. Va., May 16.—Social workers have been overwhelmed recently to assist families in distress by unemployment, said Katherine P. Lenoir of the United States Children's Bureau, in an address before State social workers.

Expenditures for relief in 1930 were 90 per cent higher in 1931 than in 1929, she said.

"Estimates of relief expenditures for April, while indicating improvement due to warmer weather, are opening up of odd jobs and certain seasonal employment, indicate that a heavy burden is still resting upon public and private relief agencies," said Lenoir.

"The situation in communities largely dependent upon a single industry has been in a depressed condition for several years is exceedingly grave. Many families are suffering from lack of adequate relief funds."

"Public officials, social workers and volunteers have been carrying burdens during the past year which have been all but overwhelming. Miss Lenoir said that even in normal times millions of children in undernourished families fall short of proper standards."

"It is estimated that even in times of prosperity nearly 10 per cent of the people in the United States are in need of help. The average income from wages in the United States in the year 1927, as estimated by the National Bureau of Economic Research, was \$1,200 a year. This is several hundred dollars below the amount estimated as necessary to support a family of five—husband, wife, and three children—at a minimum level of health and decency."

SANCTION FOR MERGERS HELD NOT PRACTICAL

Philadelphia, May 16.—The suggestion that the Federal Trade Commission be empowered to pass on the legality of proposed mergers and combinations of business enterprises, held out by Senator Charles McNary, of Oregon, in an address before the American Bar Association, was met with skepticism by the audience.

"The trouble with this scheme of advanced judgment is that irreparable damage is done before the commission has had time to act," McNary said.

"The first step of mergers frequently is to combine naturally to wipe out competition lines, sometimes even to interlock the business of the several companies in such a way that they cannot be disentangled without the consent of all."

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COAL OWNERS CHANGE FAVOR PEACE METHOD

Terre Haute, Ind., May 16.—Indiana coal miners and operators inserted in their new wage contract a declaration in favor of restoring the central competitive field.

This system of negotiation, which included Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Western Pennsylvania, was smashed by the operators' refusal to accept the contract.

The contract was signed in the Florida city of Jacksonville, where the operators had been operating for some time.

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FIFTEEN BILLION LOST BY ORGANIZED CRIME

Sterling, Ill., May 16.—Organized crime is causing a direct loss of \$15,000,000,000 annually and must be stamped out, said Gov. Emmet Bennett, in dedicating a memorial to the late President.

The American people are gambling with human weakness in endorsing any superficial authority over their public officials, Bennett said.

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LABOR INJUNCTION PLAN NOT WRITTEN INTO LAW

Lansing, Mich., May 16.—Anti-labor legislation is being written into law, a report by the Michigan Labor Union said.

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CANADIAN UNIONISTS MAKE GAINS IN 1930

Ottawa, Canada, May 16.—The curve for Dominion trade union membership last year, 1930, showed a gain of 2,073 for all elements of organization. The Canadian Council of Labor reported a gain of 2,073 for all elements of organization.

LESS LABOR, LESS WAGE ON NATION'S RAILROADS

Washington, May 16.—Less workers are employed on the Nation's railroads, and less wages are paid, according to a report by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

DEATH TOLL MOUNTS IN ANTHRACITE AREA

Hazleton, Pa., May 16.—April laid to rest a disastrous month of mining in the State of Pennsylvania. The anthracite miners' strike in this area has resulted in a loss of life and property.

PAUPER WAGE PAID IN DALLAS

Dallas, Texas, May 16.—The cry of "pauper wage" is being heard in Dallas, Texas, where the local labor market is flooded with unemployed workers.

"LABOR SCARCITY" CRY RAISED

Dallas, Texas, May 16.—The cry of "labor scarcity" is being heard in Dallas, Texas, where the local labor market is flooded with unemployed workers.

WAGE CUTS PROTESTED

Salt Lake City, May 16.—Reports from Salt Lake City indicate that wage cuts are being protested by workers in the city.

ILINOIS LAWMAKERS DEFEAT LABOR BILLS

Springfield, Ill., May 16.—The wage and hour bills introduced by the Illinois Legislature have been defeated by the opposition.

IMMIGRATION DROPS

Washington, May 16.—Immigration of all classes dropped more than 50 per cent in 1930, according to the Census Bureau.

OLD AGE RELIEF VOTED

Concord, N. H., May 16.—The House of Representatives has voted to appropriate \$100,000,000 for old age relief.

FREE TEXT BOOKS URGED

Jackson, Tenn., May 16.—Free text books for the poor have been urged by the Tennessee Federation of Labor Unions.

PASS OLD AGE PENSION

Washington, May 16.—The Senate has passed a bill for old age pension, which will provide for the support of the aged.

FREE TEXT BOOKS URGED

Jackson, Tenn., May 16.—Free text books for the poor have been urged by the Tennessee Federation of Labor Unions.